ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Data to be transmitted over a network ~~comprise~~ <u>includes</u> a first part (perhaps audio) which is always to be transmitted and alternative second parts (perhaps video coded at different compression rates) of which one is to be chosen for transmission, depending on the current network capacity. In order to accommodate systems where (owing perhaps to the use of a congestion control mechanism such as TCP) the capacity available is initially undetermined, one firstly begins to transmit just the first part. When the network capacity becomes known (typically by monitoring the performance of the network in transmitting the first part), one of the alternative second parts is chosen and transmission of [[its]] <u>it</u> commences. If desired this may initially be preferentially to, or to the exclusion of, further transmission of the first part.